

STORY 49.

THE PROPHET'S SELF-DENIAL
HE PLACES THE NEED OF OTHERS BEFORE THOSE
OF HIS BELOVED DAUGHTER.

FATIMA the beloved daughter of the Prophet and the wife of (Hazrat) Ali performed all her household duties with her own hands. She cooked food, ground corn and brought water from the well. Once (Hazrat) Ali came to know that the Prophet had some female slave for disposal. He said to Fatima. "You have so much work on your hands daily that you cannot find time to attend the needs of the children. This is the time to go to the Prophet and ask him to give you a female slave who may help you in doing household work, so that you may have some leisure from drudgery and have rest."

Fatima went, but came back soon for the Prophet was not at home. When he came home he was informed of the visit of Fatima. He at once made for her house, took his seat between her and (Hazrat) Ali and asked the object of her visit. Fatima did not speak on account of modesty and respect, but (Hazrat) Ali told everything.

What the Prophet said on this occasion is characteristic of him, and the religion which he preached. He said "You know, there are those

who have left their homes for Islam. Their's is the first claim upon me. Then there are other poor Muslims whose needs I have to meet. If anything can be spared from them, then I will consider your request".

(Hazrat) Ali and Fatima had nothing to say to this and kept quiet.

The above story shows how entirely the Prophet had eliminated self from his character.

A long time after this some more slaves came. The Prophet gave one to his daughter with the following instructions:

'Do half the work yourself and let the slave do the other half. Grind the cron together, and give the slave the same food as you yourself eat.'